

Message Text

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S E C R E T TEL AVIV 1756

EXDIS

EO 11652: GDS
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SUBJ: RABIN'S VIEWS ON DISENGAGEMENT NEGOTIATIONS

1. MINISTER OF LABOR RABIN ATTENDED A DINNER AT MY RESIDENCE ON THE EVENING OF MARCH 23. IN A PRIVATE CONVERSATION, RABIN EXPRESSED HIS VIEWS OF NEXT STEPS IN NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE ARABS. RABIN HAS BEGUN TO SPEAK OUT ON THESE MATTERS (WE REPORTED HIS LENGTHY INTERVIEW IN THE HEBREW PRESS IN TEL AVIV 1674) AND, GIVEN HIS BACKGROUND, WILL HAVE INFLUENCE IN THE GOI RE SECURITY RELATED MATTERS. I BELIEVE, THEREFORE, THAT ADDRESSEES WILL BE INTERESTED IN THIS SUMMARY OF RABIN'S PERSONAL VIEWS AS EXPRESSED TO US.

2. RABIN INITIATED THE CONVERSATION BY COMMENTING ADVERSELY ON A PROPOSAL BY A RESPECTED JOURNALIST (BEING REPORTED SEPARATELY) TO FINESSE THE SYRIAN DISENGAGEMENT PROBLEM BY MOVING IMMEDIATELY TO A PALESTINIAN SETTLEMENT WHICH WOULD ESTABLISH AN INDEPENDENT PALESTINE STATE COMPOSED OF THE WEST BANK AND GAZA WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF AN ECONOMIC ASSOCIATION OR REGIONAL GROUPING COMPRISING ISRAEL, THE NEW STATE, AND JORDAN. RABIN SAID THAT IN HIS OPINION IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE NOT TO ADDRESS SERIOUSLY THE PROBLEMS OF ATTEMPTING TO ACHIEVE A DISENGAGEMENT WITH SYRIA. NO GIMMICK COULD FINESSE THIS PROBLEM. THIS DID NOT, HE EMPHASIZED, MEAN THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH SYRIA WOULD BE EASY OR THAT HE WAS OPTIMISTIC THAT A DISENEGAGEMENT AGREEMENT

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COULD BE ACHIEVED IN THE NEAR FUTURE. INDEED, HE THOUGHT THAT IT

WOULD "TAKE TIME" GIVEN THE ISSUES INVOLVED FOR BOTH SIDES.

3. HE THEN DEVELOPED THE LINE OF THINKING THAT EVEN IF AN ISRAELI-SYRIAN AGREEMENT WERE NOT ACHIEVED IN THE NEAR FUTURE, PERHAPS THE MERE FACT OF THE NEGOTIATIONS BEING ENGAGED MIGHT ALLOW SADAT TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP IN WORKING OUT A SETTLEMENT WITH ISRAEL. HE EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT BY ENGAGING IN THE PROCESS OF NEGOTIATIONS, ASAD WILL HAVE BECOME SUFFICIENTLY "CONTAMINATED" BY HIS DEALINGS WITH ISRAEL SO AS NOT TO BE ABLE TO STAND IN THE WAY OF SADAT. (IN THE CONTEXT OF THE DISCUSSION, RABIN MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE BELIEVES THAT SADAT INDEED WISHED TO REACH AN ACCOMMODATION WITH ISRAEL, ALTHOUGH HE WOULD NOT GO SO FAR AS TO SAY SADAT WISHED "PEACE." HE WAS MOST IMPRESSED BY ARNAUD DEBORCHGRAVE'S REPORT TO HIM OF HIS CONVERSATION WITH SADAT DURING DEBORCHGRAVE'S VISIT TO ISRAEL - TEL AVIV 1073 (EXDIS.)

4. ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT SADAT FOR REASONS DESCRIBED ABOVE WOULD CONSIDER HIS SYRIAN-CUM-RADICAL-ARAB FLANK SECURE BY THE MERE FACT OF SYRIAN-ISRAEL DISENGAGEMENT NEGOTIATIONS, RABIN EXPECTED THAT THE EGYPTIANS WOULD PUSH FOR AN OVERALL "SETTLEMENT" WHICH WOULD INCLUDE FINAL ARRANGEMENTS CONCERNING THE SINAI AND A RESOLUTION OF THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE. AS CONCERNS THE SINAI, RABIN STATED THAT ANY SETTLEMENT WOULD HAVE TO BE ON THE BASIS OF RECOGNIZED EGYPTIAN SOVEREIGNTY OVER THIS TERRITORY, POINTING OUT THAT SADAT NEEDS THIS, AND THIS WOULD GIVE ISRAEL NO PROBLEMS.

5. REVERTING TO HIS STARTING POINT CONCERNING THE PALESTINIANS, RABIN POINTED OUT THAT A PROPOSAL FOR AN INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE IN THE WEST BANK IN THE CONTEXT OF AN ASSOCIATION WITH JORDAN AND ISRAEL WAS A NON-STARTER PRIMARILY DUE TO PALESTINIAN HOSTILITY TO ISRAEL. THEY COULD NOT, THEREFORE, BE CONNED INTO AN ARRANGEMENT WHEREBY THEY ARE ACCORDED NOMINAL INDEPENDENCE UNDER THE "AUSPICES" OF THE ISRAELI -- AND PROBABLY JORDANIAN -- SECURITY FORCES. RABIN ADDED THAT ISRAEL COULD NOT BE EXPECTED TO TOLERATE A TRULY INDEPENDENT AND HOSTILE (HE MADE CLEAR THAT THE WORDS WERE SYNONOMOUS IN HIS MIND) PALESTINIAN STATE IN HER WEST BANK, SINCE IT WOULD QUICKLY FALL UNDER SOVIET INFLUENCE. RABIN ADDED THAT HE DID

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NOT IMAGINE THAT HUSSAIN WOULD BE TOO ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THIS PROSPECT EITHER AND HE DID NOT TAKE SERIOUSLY HIS THREAT TO WASH HIS HANDS OF THE WEST BANK. RABIN EMPHASIZED THAT AN INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE IN THE WEST BANK WOULD BE A DESTABILIZING RATHER THAN A STABILIZING ELEMENT IN THE AREA BECAUSE OF CERTAINTY OF THE PREDOMINANCE OF SOVIET INFLUENCE IN SUCH AN ENTITY, A SITUATION WHICH ISRAEL COULD NOT TOLERATE. RABIN NOTED THAT WE COULD DRAW OUR OWN CONCLUSION AS TO THE RESULTS

OF THIS SCENARIO.

6. THE ONLY SOLUTION THAT RABIN COULD FORESEE FOR THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM WOULD BE WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE JORDANIAN STATE. AS HE SAW IT, THE PALESTINIAN HOMELAND WOULD BE CONSIDERED BOTH THE EAST AND WEST BANKS OF THE JORDAN WITH REFUGEES BEING ENCOURAGED TO RETURN TO EITHER AREA. FOR PURPOSES OF THIS PROPOSAL, GAZA WOULD BE EXCLUDED BUT THE 200,000 REFUGEES IN GAZA WOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO MIGRATE TO THE NEW PALESTINIAN HOMELAND. RABIN DID NOT ADDRESS THE FUTURE OF GAZA OTHER THAN TO SAY IT HAD TO BE SEPARATE FROM THE QUESTION OF HOW TO DEAL WITH THE WEST BANK.) ISRAEL RECOGNIZED THAT OVER A PERIOD OF YEARS -- THE LONGER THE BETTER -- JORDAN WOULD PROBABLY BE TAKEN OVER BY THE PALESTINIANS AND BECOME, IN EFFECT, A PALESTINIAN STATE. BY THIS TIME, HOWEVER, THE HOPE WOULD BE THAT A TRADITION OF PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE WOULD BE ESTABLISHED.

7. AS CONCERNS THE PALESTINIANS, RABIN NOTED THAT IT WAS DIFFICULT TO ASSESS THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARD A SETTLEMENT WITH ANY REAL DEGREE OF ACCURACY BECAUSE OF THE DIVISIONS AMONG THEM. HE THOUGHT, HOWEVER, THAT EVEN SOME PLO LEADERS WERE GIVING SIGNS OF SOME RE-EVALUATION WHICH COULD LEAD THEM TO ACCEPT MUCH LESS THAN THE DESTRUCTION OF ISRAEL AS THE BASIS OF A SETTLEMENT. HE THOUGHT, THEREFORE, THAT THERE WAS A GOOD POSSIBILITY THAT THE IDEA OF A JORDANIAN SOLUTION COULD BE MADE ACCEPTABLE TO THE PALESTINIANS EVEN IF IT FELL FAR SHORT OF WHAT THEY WOULD CONSIDER AS IDEAL.

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